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UNDP strategic plan, 2008-2011

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Addendum 2

Implications on the UNDP strategic plan, 2008-2011, of General Assembly resolution 62/208 on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System*

1. As indicated in the preface of the UNDP strategic plan, 2008-2011, the Executive Board endorsed the plan as amended and augmented by decision 2007/32. The decision requested the Administrator to submit to the Board, at its annual session 2008, implications of General Assembly resolution 62/208, on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System, for the strategic plan, including in the chapters on coordination, democratic governance, capacity development, and crisis prevention and recovery.

2. UNDP has prepared the present report in response to paragraph 3 (b) (iii) of decision 2007/32 of the Executive Board.

A. Introduction of resolution 62/208

3. The introduction of resolution 62/208 makes reference to several important principles that are directly relevant to the dual role of UNDP as a development partner to developing countries and as manager of the resident coordinator system. Notably, the resolution emphasizes the principle of national ownership, with operational activities carried out for the benefit of the programme countries, at the request of those countries and in accordance with their own policies and priorities for development. The strategic plan, 2008-2011, similarly emphasizes that UNDP operations are anchored in the development priorities and plans of programme countries and that they are nationally owned and led. UNDP adheres firmly to the principle of the centrality of national

*The detailed discussions with delegates required to provide the Executive Board with the most current information has delayed submission of the present report.

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ownership of all of its activities, including those related to conflict prevention, recovery and democratic governance.

4. Resolution 62/208 notes the advances of the United Nations development system in implementing General Assembly resolution 59/250, and calls upon the United Nations system to accelerate its full implementation, taking into account the provisions of the present resolutions. UNDP will follow this guidance in implementing its strategic plan.

5. The resolution stresses that national governments have the primary responsibility for the development of their countries, and for coordinating all types of external assistance on the basis of national strategies and priorities... In recognition of this, UNDP has updated Chapter IV of its strategic plan to emphasize the principle of national leadership and ownership of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, and the need for the resident coordinator (with the support of the United Nations country team) to report to national authorities on progress made against the results agreed in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

6. The resolution also stresses that the purpose of reform is to make the United Nations development system more efficient and effective in its support to developing countries. It stresses that reform efforts should enhance organizational efficiency and achieve concrete development results. UNDP has updated Chapter IV of its strategic plan to align its content and scope more closely with strengthening the efficiency, effectiveness and coherence of the United Nations system in addressing national development priorities as UNDP fulfills its role as manager of the resident coordinator system.

I. Funding for operational activities of the United Nations development system

7. Paragraph 18 of resolution 62/208 stresses that regular core resources continue to be the bedrock of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, and recognizes the need for organizations to address the imbalance between core and non-core resources on a continual basis. Paragraph 20 notes that non-core resources represent an important supplement to the regular resource base of the United Nations development system, while recognizing that non-core resources are not a substitute for core resources and that un-earmarked contributions are vital for the coherence and harmonization of operational activities for development.

8. UNDP is deeply aware of the importance of regular ('core') resources and the need to address the balance between regular and other (non-core) resources. UNDP will continue to give priority to raising regular resources and engaging donors in multi-year commitments, including by further improving the quality of programme delivery and the clarity and reliability of accountability mechanisms.

II. Contribution of United Nations operational activities to national capacity development and development effectiveness

B. Capacity-building and development

9. UNDP recognizes that resolution 62/208 makes specific reference to both capacity-building and capacity development, since both development approaches may be applied – at the request of a developing country – to support its development priorities and

programming. UNDP makes reference in its strategic plan to both capacity-building and capacity development to describe the forms of support it may provide to governments, at their request.

10. Notably, in paragraph 36, the resolution stresses that "capacity development is a core function of the United Nations development system". Similarly, UNDP recognizes in its strategic plan that capacity development, and capacity-building, are the overarching contributions of UNDP to supporting national development plans and priorities.

11. Paragraph 39 of the resolution calls on the United Nations to adopt measures that ensure sustainability in capacity building activities as the United Nations system should use national execution and available national expertise and technologies as the norm in the implementation of operational activities by focusing on national structures and avoiding, where possible, the practice of establishing parallel implementation units outside of national and local institutions. UNDP agrees on the importance of avoiding establishing parallel implementation units.

12. Resolution 62/208 encourages the funds, programmes, and specialized agencies to intensify collaboration to more effectively contribute to strengthening national capacities, in accordance with national priorities and development plans, including through the common country assessment and the UNDAF. The updated chapter IV of the strategic plan emphasizes the role of the UNDAF as a common programming tool for country-level contributions of the funds and programmes towards the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, and aligned with national priorities and planning processes.

13. With regard to the implications of resolution 62/208 for programmes supported by UNDP in the area of human rights, UNDP has been guided by the overarching principals guiding United Nations operational activities as outlined in the resolution itself, as well as by decision 2007/32 of the Executive Board.

C. South-South cooperation and development of national capacities

14. Resolution 62/208 reaffirms the increased importance of South-South cooperation and encourages the United Nations organizations to mainstream support to South-South cooperation to help development countries, at their request and with their ownership and leadership, to develop capacities to maximize the benefits and impacts of SSC and triangular cooperation in order to achieve their national goals. In paragraph 53, the resolution stresses the importance of the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation within UNDP and calls on the United Nations development system to provide the Special Unit with further support to enable it to fulfill its mandate.

15. In its strategic plan, UNDP commits to stepping up efforts to seek South-South solutions and mainstream South-South approaches in its areas of focus, including by seeking ways to strengthen the work of the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation. This is further elaborated in the draft fourth cooperation framework for South-South cooperation (2008-2011), which will be submitted to the Executive Board and which provides a detailed programme of work based on resources available and those to be mobilized under the UNDP strategic plan 2008-2011.

D. Gender equality and women's empowerment

16. Paragraph 56 of resolution 62/208 reiterates its call upon the organizations of the United Nations development system to mainstream a gender perspective and to pursue gender equality and the empowerment of women in country programmes, planning

instruments, and sector-wide programmes. The resolution urges the organizations of the United Nations development system to take a coherent, coordinated approach to their work on gender-related issues, and to share good practices, tools, and methodologies through appropriate means. The updated version of the strategic plan specifically notes that UNDP will inform its Executive Board on progress in becoming a more gender-balanced organization, including among resident coordinators, and will continue to build internal capacity to address gender dimensions in all its work, as further detailed in the UNDP gender strategy, 2008-2011. The strategic plan commits UNDP to working across practices and in partnership with other United Nations organizations on initiatives aimed at helping national partners on gender-related issues.

17. In paragraph 66, resolution 62/208 calls upon organizations of the United Nations development system to continue efforts to achieve gender balance in appointments within the United Nations system, including resident coordinator and other high-level posts, with due regard to the representation of women from programme countries – developing countries in particular – and bearing in mind the principle of equitable geographical representation. In addition to reporting to the Executive Board on becoming a more gender-balanced organization, the updated version of chapter IV of the strategic plan specifically affirms that UNDP will work to ensure that, for candidates with equivalent competencies, gender and geographical balance will be taken into account in the selection and appointment of resident coordinators.

E. Transition from relief to development

18 Resolution 62/208 emphasizes several important issues that have a direct bearing on the work of UNDP in the area of transition from relief to development. In paragraph 78, the resolution refers explicitly to UNDP and the role it is requested to play in building support capacity for early recovery in situations of transition from relief to development. The resolution stresses the need for transitional activities to be undertaken under national ownership (paragraph 67), and requests the United Nations development system, upon the request of affected countries, to respond to countries affected by disasters or conflicts in transition from relief to development in support of national priorities, while recognizing the differences in these situations (paragraph 69). Additionally, in paragraph 71, the resolution "requests the organizations of the United Nations development system to strengthen interdepartmental and inter-agency coordination in order to ensure an integrated, coherent and coordinated approach to assistance at the country level, which takes account of the complexity of challenges that countries in those circumstances face and the country-specific character of those challenges". Paragraph 80 emphasizes the role of the Peacebuilding Commission, requesting the United Nations development system to "...take into account in its assistance to countries emerging from conflict that are on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, [and] the advisory role that the Commission can play in relation to peacebuilding and recovery strategies...".

19. UNDP will fully integrate this guidance into its work relating to transition from relief to development.

F. Improved functioning of the United Nations development system

20 Resolution 62/208 highlights and emphasizes several points that are directly linked to the need to enhance organizational efficiency and achieve concrete development results so that the United Nations is a more effective, efficient, and coherent partner in responding to national development plans and priorities. These elements include:

(a) aligning programming documents, such as the common country assessment and the UNDAF, to national development plans and strategies;

(b) using the UNDAF as a collective, coherent, and integrated programming and monitoring framework, bringing increased opportunities for joint initiatives and greater alignment with national development plans and priorities;

(c) underscoring that the resident coordinator system is owned by the United Nations development system as a whole, and that its functioning should be participatory, collegial and accountable;

(d) recognizing the central role of resident coordinators in improving the effectiveness of United Nations operational activities in responding to national development priorities, and highlighting that resident coordinators should report to national authorities on priorities made against results agreed in the UNDAF;

(e) noting that the 'delivering as one' pilots are being undertaken at the initiative of the pilot country governments on a voluntary basis, and taking note that the General Assembly has called for an independent evaluation of the pilots;

(f) reporting on transaction costs and costs and benefits of the functioning of the resident coordinator system and improving the selection and training of resident coordinators; and,

(d) recognizing that the management of the resident coordinator system continues to be firmly anchored in UNDP, establishing mechanisms to ensure that the cost of the resident coordinator system does not reduce resources destined for development programmes in programme countries.

21. The revised chapter IV of the strategic plan, 2008-2011, directly reflects and incorporates the guidance of resolution 62/208. UNDP has also based the update on comments received during informal consultations with Executive Board members. It now provides greater clarity on the issue of strengthening the UNDAF as a tool for coherent programming and with greater alignment with national development plans and priorities; and it clarifies that the 'delivering as one' pilots are being undertaken at the initiative of the pilot country governments, on a voluntary basis; taking note that the General Assembly has called for an independent evaluation of the 'delivering as one' pilot.